

A Blueprint for Improving AIS in Montana (Draft)

Introduction: We've made great strides in addressing the threat of AIS in Montana, and all three agencies are to be commended for their good work. The program is now at a point where it needs to mature. As the threat becomes more acute, our focus as a state needs to sharpen, and sharpen quickly.

Step one: Strengthen our current regulatory structure to improve program efficiency/effectiveness.

Proposal: Consolidate the regulatory structure by redrawing the lines of authority over AIS, from plants vs. animals (the current split) to water vs. land. AIS regulatory functions currently housed in Agriculture should be moved to FWP.

Under current law this can be accomplished by MOU.

This will require the transfer of employees, funding, and equipment.

(possible statutory changes may include the need to strengthen existing regulatory authority over standing water on watercraft, the ability to quarantine fouled watercraft and emergency powers – should we mandate that all boats entering the state must be inspected prior to launching in any state waters?)

Agriculture continues involvement in AIS through its administration of funding of AIS activities from the Noxious Weed Trust Fund, and should coordinate this funding with FWP and DNRC.

Proposal: Move the AIS program in FWP from the Hatchery Bureau to the Habitat Bureau, to emphasize connection to habitat. It's important to recognize the logical connections with hatcheries (fish transfers), fish health lab (pathogens), wildlife, enforcement and the exotic species committee.

Proposal: Bring the Department of Transportation into the AIS fold to ensure that all commercially hauled boats entering the state are adequately inspected at Ports of Entry. The experience in Idaho shows that the DOT stations at the border are an important interception point for AIS. This can be accomplished by cooperative agreement and primarily involves training of personnel and notification, inspection, and reporting protocols.

Proposal: Retain the DNRC grant program, which has proven to be very successful for control, eradication, and surveying. Continue survey efforts to better guide watercraft inspection, quarantine, and control efforts.

Proposal: Expand the use of cooperative agreements with local agencies, such as weed districts, tribes, the Flathead Basin Commission, etc., to expand our network of boots on the ground. Expand training opportunities for local agencies/cooperators.

Proposal: All AIS information (survey, control, inspection) is housed at NRIS and is accessible to all interested parties.

Proposal: Adjust the nuts and bolts of the program based on a careful review of the Idaho program, other successful state programs, and our experience to date, including:

- extending the inspection seasons and hours of daily operation,
- improving inspection station operations such as uniform protocols and Standard Operating Procedures for inspection decontamination and quarantine procedures,
- increasing number and location of inspection stations to fill current gaps,
- enhancing data collection and timely sharing with mobile devices,
- evaluating effectiveness of public education program to optimize messaging,
- increasing consistency of public education and outreach information with regional partners,
- reviewing and strengthening our rapid response efforts, including, county, state, and federal partners, Tribes, watershed groups, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's)
- exploring a passport system similar to Idaho, and
- staying abreast of new threats.

Step two: The agencies develop AIS budgets based on the above structural adjustments.

Step three: Continue building out to a regional effort.

Proposal: Explore a focused multistate/provincial effort between Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Alberta through involvement with various regional groups, including the Western Regional Panel and Mississippi Regional Panel for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, and the 100th Meridian Initiative, and others. Consider developing MOAs among five northwestern states, and provinces of BC and Alberta to develop regional approach for AIS prevention and cost-sharing key inspection stations. (FWP, DNRC)

Proposal: Engage the Western Governor's Association. The WGA has a Policy Resolution (Combating Invasive Species, Policy Resolution 10-4) which should be revisited and strengthened, emphasizing importance of regional AIS coordination, especially regarding AIS prevention efforts. (Governor's Office).

Proposal: Engage the Northwest Power Planning Council (Governor's Office).

Step four: Actively engage the Federal Government on this issue.

Proposal: Work with the US Border Patrol to improve inspections/reporting at the border (FWP, Governor's Office).

Proposal: Pressure US Department of Interior to address the spread of invasive mussels on watercraft from infested waters in the lower Colorado watershed. Movement of Quagga mussels from Lake Mead, Lake Havasu and other infested waters are an immediate threat to the Pacific Northwest, and are

important AIS issues, although the risks to Montana are much broader in terms of species and geography (DNRC, Governor's Office, in cooperative effort with Idaho).

Proposal: Work with our Congressional Delegation on the above, and to build the case for additional federal funding (Governor's Office, DNRC, FWP).

Step five: Work with the University System to promote research on AIS prevention, detection and control. For example, expand research on developing effective control methods for flowering rush (Agriculture, FWP).

Step six: Create 1) a working group to oversee transition, and 2) an ad-hoc steering committee to oversee and monitor future progress/activities. The working group would be agency personnel to get us through the next 5 months, the ad-hoc steering committee would consist of agency, private, industry, angling, conservation, legislators(?) to review program strengths and weaknesses, identify opportunities for improving the program, act as a sounding board, and bring issues/concerns to the table for solutions.

Prepared by: Tim Baker, Natural Resource Policy Advisor

Date: January 28, 2013

AIS Blueprint, if \$500,000 of additional funds were available

Assumption: DNRC funding is not changed

Assumption: DOT does not need additional funds

All funds for expanded capacity go to FWP

STAFF TRANSFER – 1 FTE AIS PLANT EXPERTISE (additional \$60,544)

One permanent FTE will transfer from MDA to FWP, providing in-house AIS plant expertise. However, funding for this portion was provided by the Noxious Weed Trust Fund, so separate funding will be required to move this employee to FWP.

MONITORING (additional \$159,490)

Monitoring is a key component of early detection for new AIS invasions. Current FWP biennial expenditures for early detection and monitoring are \$145,000. We would propose to increase our monitoring efforts in order to improve rapid response, planning efforts, and outreach.

By acquiring permanent staff to manage watercraft inspection crews (below under prevention), current FTE could supervise additional seasonal technicians (as well as conduct additional monitoring) to increase the frequency of sampling and number of locations sampled.

Technicians: 2 @ 1000 hours/yr at a total hourly rate of \$15.23 = \$30,460/year

Monitoring equipment: \$10,000/biennium

Increased samples will require additional resources to be dedicated to the FWP Dreissenid lab, including stable funding: Full-time Lab technician: 2080 hours/yr at a total hourly rate of \$20.75 = \$43,160
Processing of 750 Montana samples is approximately \$1.50/sample = \$1,125

Aquatic weed monitoring/surveying conducted by MDA was funded by DNRC grant (\$47,000/biennium).

PREVENTION (additional \$276,642)

Enhancements to the *Watercraft Inspection Program*

Approximate cost of operating an inspection station for 16 weeks/ 12 hr days/4 staff = \$40,000

Operation of the 2012 FWP inspection stations cost \$445,000. This included 6 border stations, 2 internal highway stations, and 3 roving station. Operation of the 2012 MDA inspections stations cost \$140,000. This included 3 inspection stations at Noxon/Cabinet Gorge, and 1 roving station on the upper and lower Missouri.

Additional staff will require additional supervision. Managing the watercraft inspection stations has become a year-round effort. An additional 1 FTE dedicated to "Watercraft Inspection Station Supervisor" is necessary:

Supervisor: 2080 hours/yr at a total hourly rate of \$16.02 = \$33,321/year

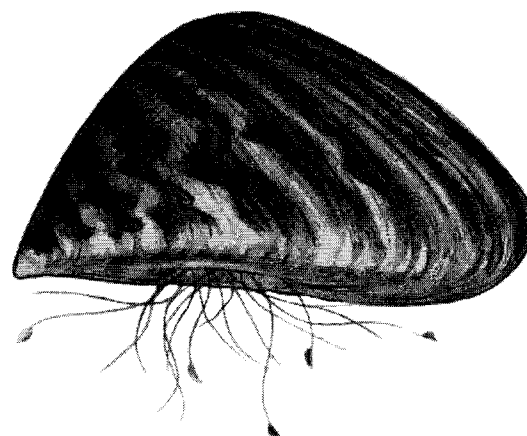
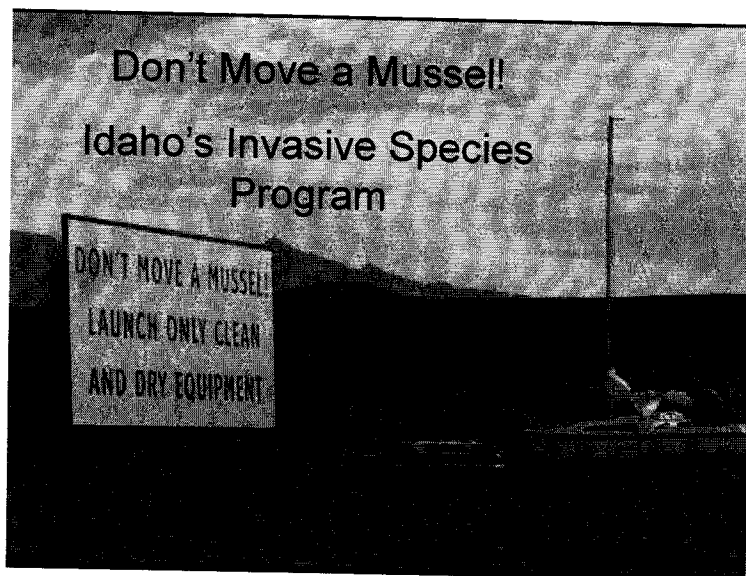
Four new stations (\$160,000): 2 border and 2 internal.

Locations for all stations will be determined with stakeholder input and analysis of high risk locations.

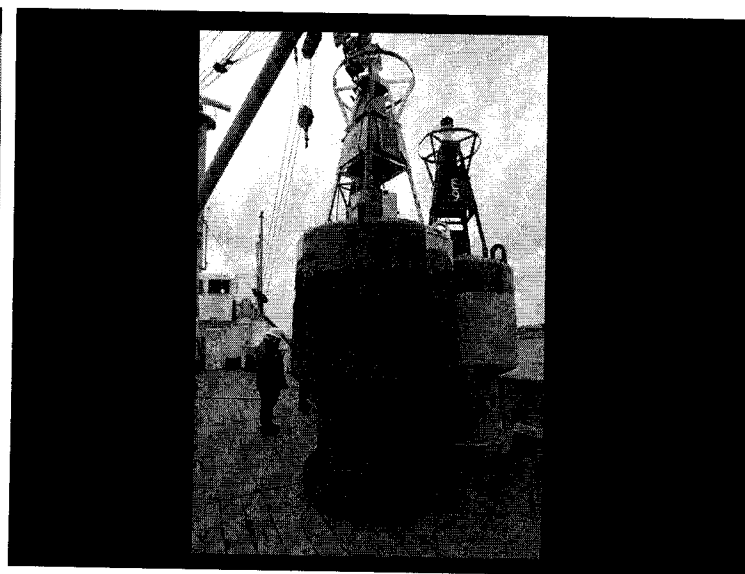
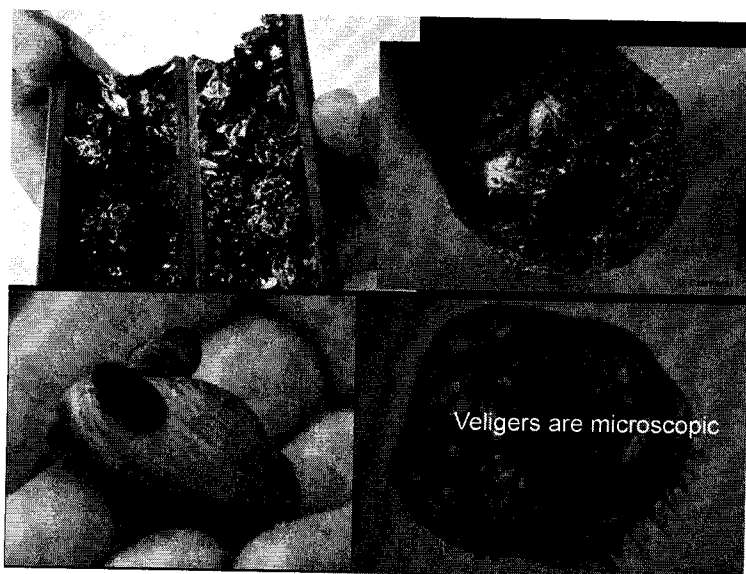
Passports program (\$40,000)

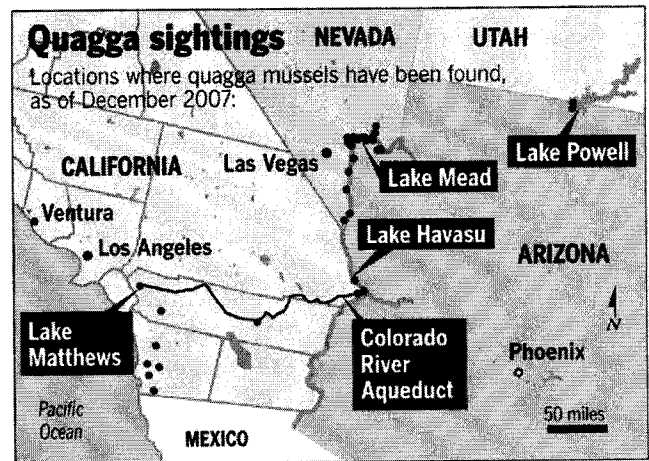
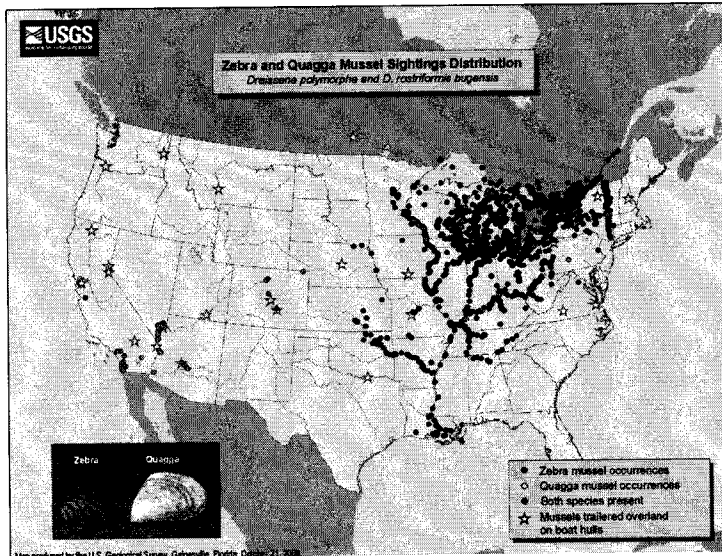
Mobile data entry subscription (\$10,000)

Note: if additional funds are available, priorities would include enforcement, and increased hours/extended seasons for inspections.



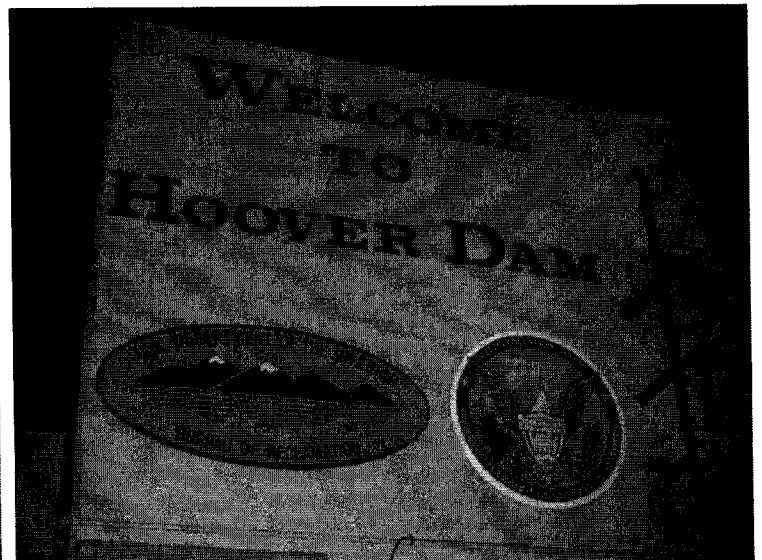
Gina Mikel, <http://www.scientificillustrator.com>





Sources: California Department of Fish and Game;
 Arizona Department of Game and Fish

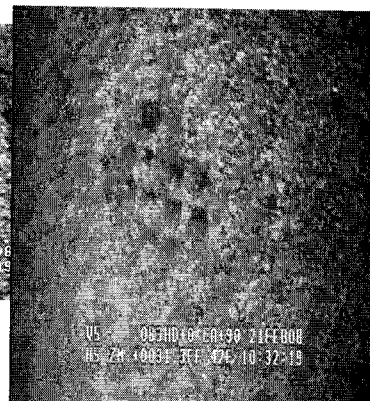
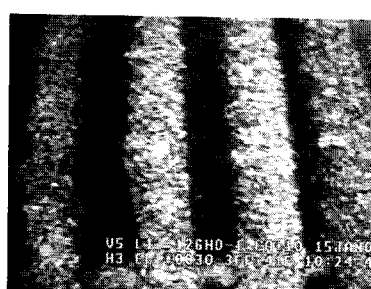
Brian Snyder / Star staff



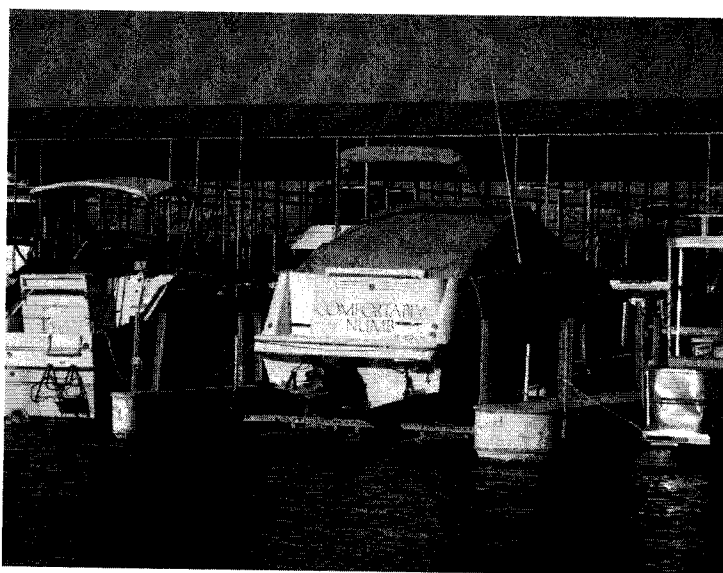
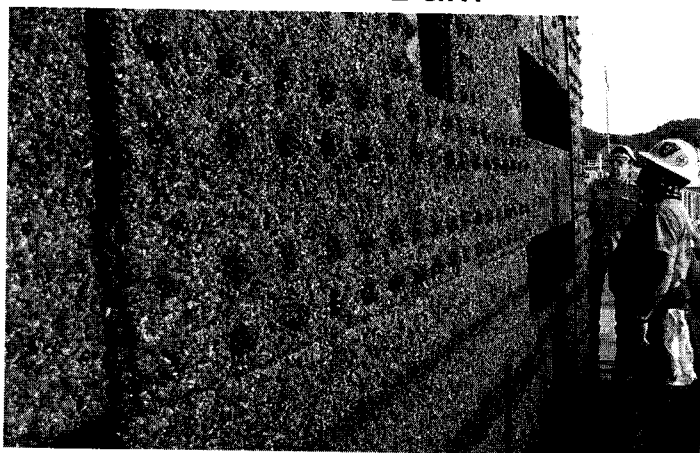
Parker Dam
Plates were in the water for 6 weeks

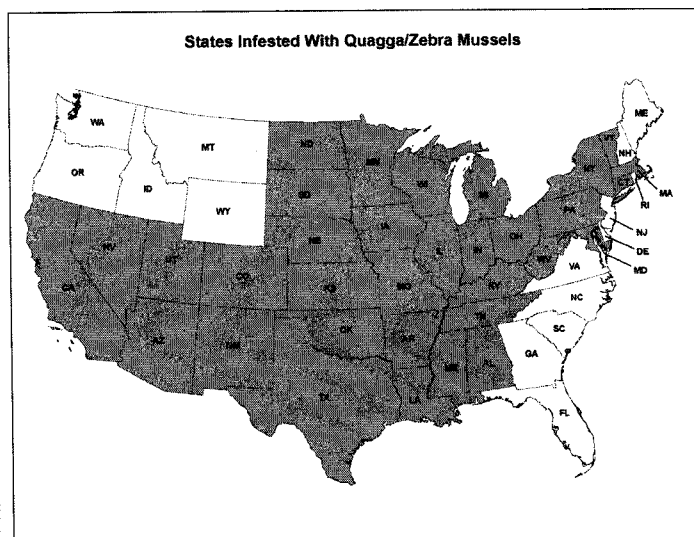


Parker Dam – February 2008



Parker Dam





Idaho- Quick Review

- Idaho Legislature enacted the Idaho Invasive Species Law in 2008.
- It was in direct response to quagga mussels being discovered in the West (2007)
- Gives the Idaho State Department of Agriculture authorities for inspection, decontamination, quarantine.

Idaho- Quick Review

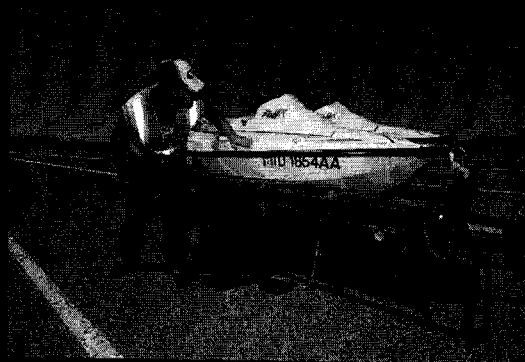
- In 2009, the Idaho Legislature enacted the Idaho Invasive Species Sticker.
- Boater User Fee.
- Dedicated Fund Administered by Agriculture.
- Fees:
 - \$10 for Idahoans
 - \$22 for non-residents
 - \$7 for non-motorized.
- Budget is approximately \$850K/annually

Invasive Species Program 2 Laws

- Idaho Invasive Species Law of 2008
 - Authorities
- "Sticker" Legislation – 2009
 - Funding Source



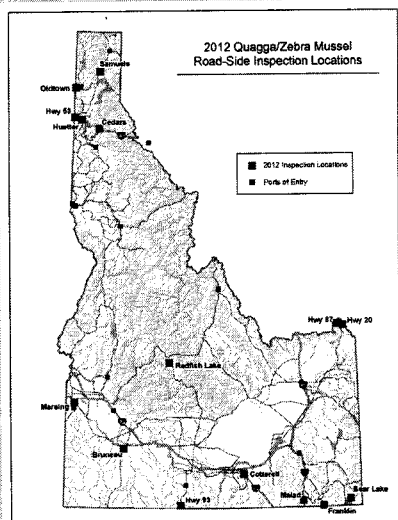
What is Idaho doing with the Funding?



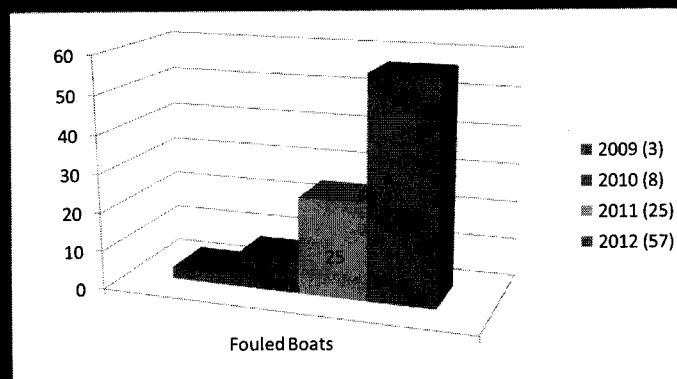
*Idaho's Program is
Operational and Prevention-based*

- 15 Agriculture inspection stations at the state line that operate seasonally

- 11 Ports of Entry (POEs) also inspect commercially hauled watercraft year round.

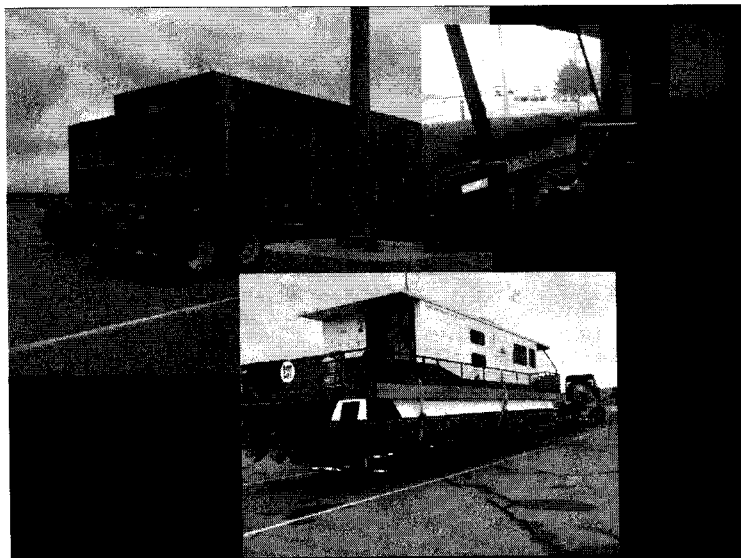


93 mussel-fouled boats intercepted to date

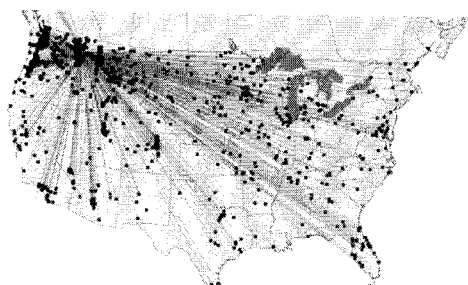


Targeting "High Risk" Boats

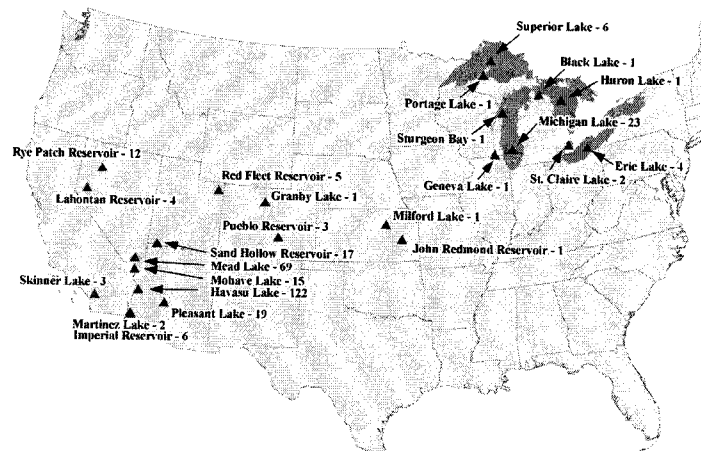
- Large Moored Boats
 - Seasonal Idaho boats (Snowbirds)
 - Boats purchased out-of-state
 - Out-of-state boats that are being relocated to Idaho



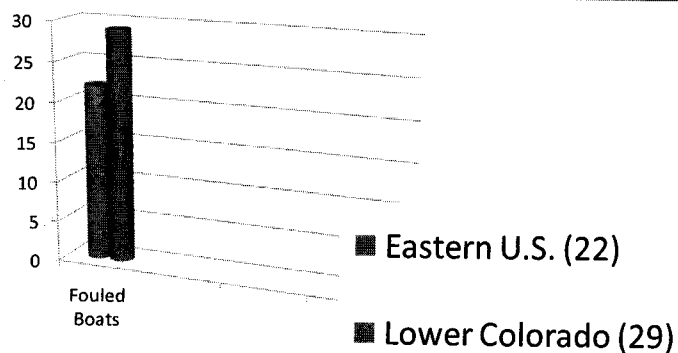
Where Did Boaters Come From?



Infested Lakes Visited by Boaters Entering Idaho 2011



Sources of Mussel-Fouled Boats (2011-2012)

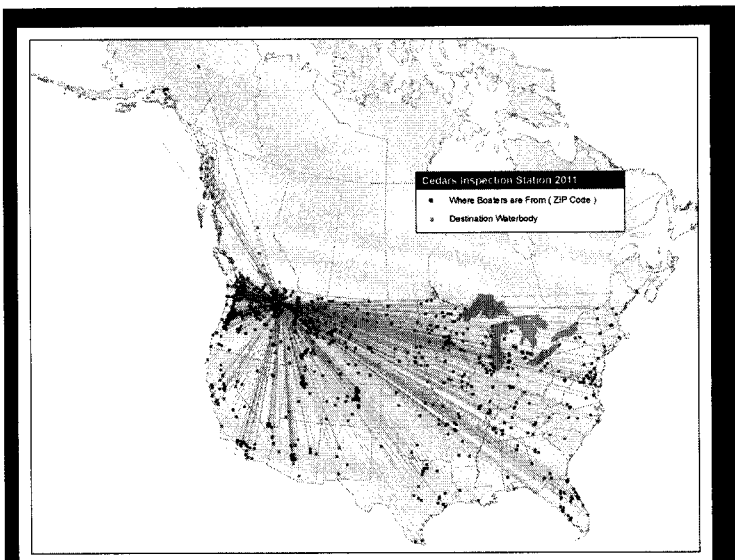
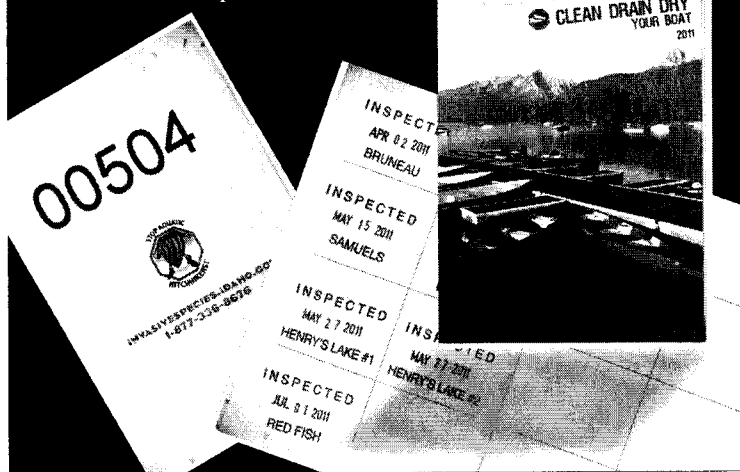


Idaho's inspection stations offer a unique opportunity for face-to-face contact.



100K "contacts" to date (2009-2012)

Idaho's Invasive Species Passport



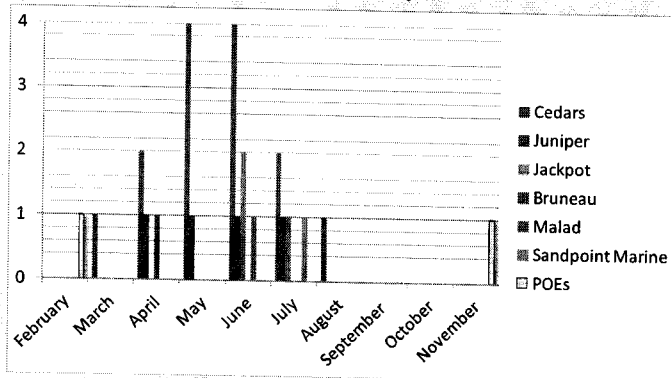
Idaho Factoids

- Total inspections statewide (in 2012): **42,362**
- Fouled boats (in 2012): **57** (that averages to a fouled boat for every 720 inspections)
- **37** of the fouled boats came from the Lower Colorado (**29** of those were from Lake Mead, that's more than 50% of the total fouled boats)
- **93** mussel fouled boats have been intercepted since the beginning of the program in 2009 (more than **120K** inspections have been done).

2012 Fouled boat destinations

- Of the **57** boats that have been intercepted in 2012 to date:
- 33 were destined for WA
- **13 were destined for ID**
- 4 were destined for BC, Canada
- 3 were destined for Alberta, Canada
- 2 were destined for Oregon
- 1 was destined for WY
- 1 was destined for MT

Seasonal Timing: 2011 Interceptions

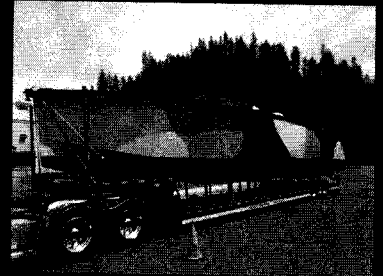


3/19/2012

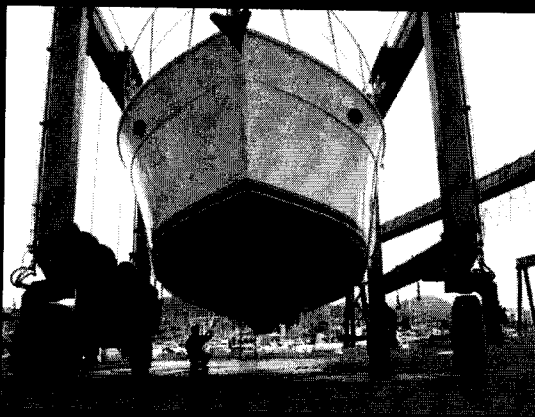
Slide 11

Key Changes - 2012

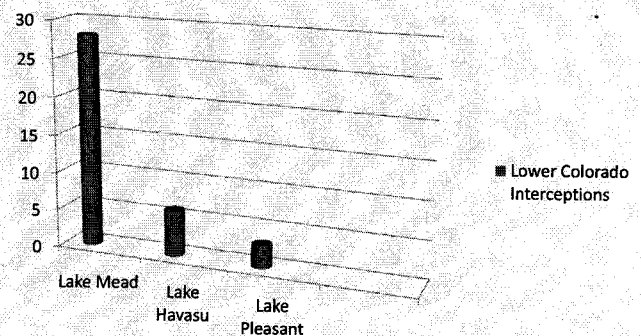
- Open earlier
- Targeting Commercially hauled boats
 - Seasonal Idaho boats
 - Boats purchased out-of-state
 - Moored Boats



Decontamination at the Destination – Does this make sense?



2012 Lower Colorado Interceptions



Thank You

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